



File Code: 1950-1

Date: JUN 16 2003

Dear Interested Party

In addition to information you previously received on the Iditarod National Historic Trail Environmental Assessment, the team working on the project wanted to share with you new requirements for participating in the Forest Service notice and comment process.

On June 4, 2003, the final rule for Notice, Comment, and Appeal Procedures for National Forest System Projects and Activities (36 CFR Part 215) was published in the Federal Register and became immediately effective for all projects that had not published legal notice for comments. In summary, to comply with new regulations, we have published an updated legal notice in the Anchorage Daily News for the Iditarod Trail project. There will be a 30-day comment period that begins the day after publication. There are some important changes in the final rule for persons interested in Forest Service projects. Those changes are listed below:

1. No extensions on comment periods are allowed.
2. Those submitting comments must provide substantive comments during the 30-day comment period.
3. Only those persons who have provided substantive comments are eligible to appeal the project.
4. Substantive comments are defined as "comments that are within the scope of the proposed action, are specific to the proposed action, have a direct relationship to the proposed action and include supporting reasons for the Responsible Official to consider."
5. A statement is required indicating that for appeal eligibility each individual or representative from each organization submitting substantive comments must sign the comments or verify identity upon request. Individual members of an organization do not meet appeal eligibility solely on the basis of membership in an organization.
6. No intervener or interested party status in the new regulations for participating in an appeal. Comments must be submitted during the comment period for a person to have appeal status.

Please contact Chuck Frey (907-743-9543) if you have any questions relating to the new regulations or process for commenting on the Iditarod Trail project. Thank you for your interest in the Chugach National Forest. We appreciate your participation.

Sincerely,

JOE L. MEADE
Forest Supervisor

